

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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MINERAL RESOURCES IN FRENCH WEST AFRICA

MINING IN UPPER VOLTA -- Dakar, Paris-Dakar, 4 Sep 52

Potential Resources

A complete study of the mining potential of Upper Volta has not yet been made, but preliminary steps to that end have been and are still being taken. In July 1952, the Service des Mines (Mine Service) was established. At present, two geologists of the Direction Federale des Mines et de la Geologie (Federal Directorate of Mines and Geology) of French West Africa are preparing a geological map of Upper Volta. Mining explorations thus far have been fragmentary and superficial. However, it is known that from the standpoint of geological structure, Upper Volta is similar to neighboring regions (including the Gold Coast), where more complete explorations have yielded good results. Thus, it may be assumed that similar results can be obtained in Upper Volta as well.

Present Discoveries and Activity

An important manganese deposit is located near Tiere (or Kiere), northwest of Houde, a few kilometers from the Bobo Dioulassa-Couagadougou road. It is approximately on an east-west axis and consists of three hills 60 meters high and totaling 300 meters in length. The minimum ore reserves of this deposit have been estimated at 700,000 tons. The manganese content is 50 percent in the eastern hill and between 20 and 30 percent in the other two hills.

According to an article published in the 26 November 1952 issue of *La Cote d'Ivoire*, Abidjan biweekly newspaper, the Tiere manganese deposit can be profitably exploited at an annual production rate of 20,000 tons. This same source also reported that, according to the Regie des Chemins de Fer (Railroad Administration) of French West Africa, it would cost 2,500 francs per ton to transport the marketable ore from Tiere to Abidjan.

Manganese is known to exist also in the Founy area, north of Batie.

Gold prospecting is being carried on by the Societe Marocaine des Mines et Produits Chimiques (Moroccan Mining and Chemical Products Company) at Fourra, a small village located 45 kilometers from Boromo. Preparations for

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actual mining operations are being made at a rapid pace. Mining is scheduled to begin at the end of 1953. Ore with as much as 40 grams of gold per ton has been reported.

The natives have mined gold for about 20 years in the area near Bagassi, a village located 50 kilometers west of Boromo. A thorough study of this deposit is desirable.

As for diamonds, the administration has never undertaken prospecting in Upper Volta. However, at present, two private companies have prospecting teams looking for diamonds in the southern section of the territory.

Copper is found at Gongoudy, about 20 kilometers east of Gaoua, where a small deposit has been worked by a European concern for about 15 years.

Pozzuolana has been found in the eastern portion of Upper Volta. If it can be obtained in comparatively large amounts, it will be of tremendous importance to the territory's economy, because at present, imported cement sells for 16,000 francs per ton at Bobo Dioulasso and 22,000 at Ouagadougou.

Graphite has been reported in the Tankodogo Cercle, near the Upper Volta-Gold Coast border.

The Bureau Minier de la France d'Outre-Mer (Bureau of Mines of Overseas France) is awaiting the issuance of an exploration permit by the government of French West Africa covering approximately the area delimited by Leo, Boromo, Dieboungou, Kanipti, Batie, and the Upper Volta-Gold Coast border.

MANGANESE IN FRENCH SUDAN, IVORY COAST, FRENCH GUINEA -- Abidjan, La Cote d'Ivoire, 26 Nov 52

Important outcrops of manganese-bearing quartzites have been reported in the Ansongo region of the French Sudan. Several surveys, one of which is still under way, have revealed the fact that the ore reserves of this deposit amount to between 5 million and 8 million tons. Laboratory analyses made thus far show that marketable ore can be obtained from this deposit either directly or with a simple enrichment process.

Further exploration in depth is necessary, however, to determine the exact extent of the deposit. To this end, negotiations are currently under way with a view to forming a prospecting company which would include the US Steel Corporation, the Bureau Minier de la France d'Outre-Mer, and the Societe Mokta el-Hadid (Mokta el-Hadid Company). It is believed that the necessary exploration operations would be carried out during the period 1953 - 1955 at an estimated cost of 100 million CFA francs and that full-scale mining would begin in 1956.

The major problem involved in working the Ansongo deposit would be the removal of the marketable ore from the mining area to the sea. The following three routes are under consideration:

1. The Niger River, from Ansongo to Kouroussa, French Guinea; and the Kankan-Conakry railroad, from Kouroussa to Conakry, French Guinea.

Use of this route would necessitate carrying out the Niandan dam and Hamako branch canal projects on the Niger River. Moreover, the cost of transporting the ore would come to about 10,000 francs per ton, as compared with its FOB value of 8,000 francs per ton. Use of this route, therefore, is inadvisable.

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2. A road or railroad to be built from Ansongo to Ouagadougou, Upper Volta, and the Abidjan-Niger railroad to Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

This route appears to be the most convenient one, but it would require a large capital outlay for construction of a 400-kilometer road or railroad.

3. The Niger River from Ansongo to Malanville, Dahomey; the road to Parakou, Dahomey; and the Benin-Niger railroad to a seaport to be built on the coast of Dahomey.

Use of this route would require large investments and high transportation costs.

Many indications of the presence of manganese have also been found in the Ivory Coast, as well as a few in the forest region of French Guinea.

BAUXITE RESOURCES IN FRENCH WEST AFRICA -- Abidjan, La Cote d'Ivoire, 12 Nov 52

The known bauxite resources of French West Africa are located for the most part in French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, and the French Sudan. Thus far, particular attention has been devoted to the exploration and exploitation of the comparatively large bauxite deposits of French Guinea, which are as follows.

1. The Los Islands deposits, currently worked by the Societe des Bauxites du Midi (Southern Bauxite Company), has an annual rate of output of between 300,000 and 350,000 tons. This output can be easily increased to 450,000 tons with little additional capital outlay for an expansion of facilities for stocking the ore. Reserves of marketable ore are estimated at 10 million tons. Exploitation of the bauxite resources on Tamara Island is not foreseen before the completion of the current 4-year development plan, since the reserves on Kassa Island are sufficient to feed the processing plant for about 10 years.

2. The Boke deposit of the Societe des Bauxites du Midi is believed to contain, on the basis of explorations carried out to date, between 50 million and 80 million tons of bauxite, with an aluminum content of approximately 55 percent. Prospecting will continue at the present rate (expenditure of 20 million CFA francs annually) until 1959. Preparations for actual exploitation of the deposit can be made between 1956 and 1959. It is estimated that the future Boke mines will produce annually about 500 million tons of dry bauxite, which will be processed locally for the production of aluminum. The finished product will be transported by a 150-kilometer railroad to a port to be built in the Victoria area. The total cost of preparing the deposit for exploitation is estimated at 6 billion francs.

3. The Kinkia deposits of the Compagnie Richemey (Richemey Company) on the basis of initial explorations, have reserves estimated at between 20 million and 30 million tons of bauxite with a comparatively low aluminum content.

4. Initial exploration of the Labella deposit indicates the presence of between 20 million and 40 million tons of bauxite with a low aluminum content.

5. Numerous indications of the presence of bauxite have been reported also in other areas of French Guinea. Determination of reserves, however, must await further prospecting.

Many indications of the presence of bauxite have been found in the French Sudan (particularly in the Kayes region) and in the Ivory Coast (Bas Cavally region).

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MAURITANIA COPPER DEPOSIT TO BE EXPLOITED -- Marseille, L'Antenne, 26 Nov 52

On 1 July 1950. on the basis of deliberations made by the Grand Council of French West Africa and the General Council of Mauritania, the Syndicat de l'Inchiri (Inchiri Syndicate) was organized to survey and eventually exploit the copper resources discovered in the Akjoujt region of Mauritania. The syndicate's expenditures are covered by the following organizations: administration: Mauritania, 25 percent; government of French West Africa, 25 percent; and Bureau Minier de la France d'Outre-Mer, 50 percent. Its initial capital of 75 million CFA francs was increased to 200 million to speed up its work.

Thus far, the syndicate has made 24 drillings totaling 2,714 meters and has completed a 100-meter section of a shaft which was begun in June 1952.

Present estimates place the Akjoujt copper (in metal form) reserves at 600,000 tons.

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